

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ADP-00 SS-15 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4964

INFO CINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2323

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, UY, US

SUBJ: MILITARY ASSISTANCE

CINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: A) STATE 145559; B) MVD 2290

1. WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED URUGUAYAN PURCHASE OF WEAPONS PACKAGE PRIOR TO DEPARTMENTAL ACTION. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE MAKE FOLLOWING OBERVATIONS:

A) REFTEL A IMPLIES THAT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN URUGUAY ARE GEARED ONLY TO COMBATTING AN ESSENTIALLY URBAN TERRORIST THREAT. IN FACT, THE PROGRAM ALSO HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTING TO A MODEST MODERNIZATION OF THE URUGUAYAN ARMED FORCES FOR SOME YEARS. AS A RESULT OF THIS PROGRAM, WE ENJOY A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH URUGUAYAN ARMED FORCES AND ARE ABLE TO HAVE DIRECT ACCESS AND EXERT SOME INFLUENCE ON MILITARY.

B) ON THE OTHER HAND, THE IMPLICATION IN REFTEL A IS THAT THE UH-1H MIGHT BE USED HERE AGAINST URBAN TERRORISTS. WE CONSIDER THIS POSSIBILITY IMPROBABLE. FIRST, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE REQUEST ARISES FROM A DESIRE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR URUGAYAN FORCES ALONG THE NATION'S BORDERS. SECOND, THE UH-1H, EQUIPPED WITH AN AREA-TYPE WEAPON, SIMPLY IS NOT FEASIBLE AS AN ANTI-URBAN TERRORIST SYSTEM.

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C) THIS PROPOSAL REPRESENTS A COMMERCIAL BUY WHICH COULD AND PROBABLY WOULD BE MADE ELSEWHERE IF WE DENY THE LICENSE. WE ASSUME THE UAF HAS DECIDED THE HELICOPTERS WILL BE ARMED AND THAT THE PROPOSED WEAPONS ARE AVAILABLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION IF THESE WEAPONS WERE TO BE MISUSED. HOWEVER, THE REACTION WOULD BE LEVIED AS MUCH AGAINST NATION PROVIDING THE HELICOPTERS WITH LITTLE NOTE TAKEN AS TO THE ORIGIN OF ANY WEAPONS THEY MIGHT BE CARRYING. THUS, ANY POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES ALREADY EXISTS.

D) FINALLY, WE ARE SURE THERE WOULD BE A STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION HERE TO ANY TURNDOWN BY THE U.S. FOR THESE WEAPONS. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF SUCH AN ADVERSE REACTION WOULD BE THAT ANY MODERATING INFLUENCE WE ARE ABLE TO EXERT ON THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED AND WE COULD DRIVE THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY TO DEPEND ON OTHER ARMS SOURCES.

2. AS WAS APPARENT FROM OUR REFTTEL B, WHICH CROSSED WITH DEPTTEL, THE EMBASSY GIVES CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO WEAPONS OFFERS WHICH HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE CURRENT LOCAL SITUATION. WE BELIEVE THAT IMPORTANT ITEMS MUST BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. GIVEN ALL THE ABOVE MENTIONED FACTORS IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE A DENIAL WOULD BE IN OUR BEST INTERESTS.
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